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Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-first session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Ayman **Elgammal** (Egypt)

Addendum

Coordination questions: implementation of the Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

(Item 5 (b))

1. At its 5th meeting, on 12 June 2001, the Committee considered the report of the independent evaluation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA) (E/AC.51/2001/6 and Corr.1) and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (E/AC.51/2001/7).

2. The report was introduced by the representative of the Economic Commission for Africa (co-Chair of UNSIA). He stated that in the absence of the review team, the Commission was assuming the responsibility for introducing their report. The note by the Secretary-General was introduced by the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Discussion

3. Doubt was raised about the quality and validity of the evaluation report for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it was felt that the duration of two months for the evaluation was inadequate to ensure that a detailed and thorough analysis would be done. In addition, the questionnaire was considered to be too simple to capture, in full, the information required for a comprehensive evaluation. Furthermore, it was noted that only 6 of 53 countries in Africa had been visited. Finally, a number of

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persons whose names appeared in the list of persons interviewed clarified that they had had general discussions on Africa over lunch and that these could not be considered interviews on UNSIA.

4. It was also observed that, while the report referred to UNSIA's inability to bring in additional financial resources, it had failed to mention those resources that had actually been mobilized through its efforts.

5. In commenting on the note by the Secretary-General, disappointment was expressed that even though the disclaimer contained in the note indicated that the Secretary-General did not necessarily agree with some of the views of the evaluators, no details on this had been given, contrary to established practice. It was also noted that a minority of 8 agencies had commented on the evaluation report, as compared with the 17 agencies that had provided inputs and favourable comments to the 2000 progress report presented to the Committee.

6. Surprise was expressed that agencies that had been positive in the previous reports of UNSIA suddenly contradicted themselves by supporting the findings and main recommendation of the evaluation report.

7. Views were expressed that endorsed the main recommendation of the evaluation report — that UNSIA be brought to a close. However, less support was expressed for the "dialogue framework" which had been recommended to replace it. Doubts were expressed on whether the Economic Commission for Africa was best placed to assume the role recommended by the report, and the view was expressed that what was required in addressing African development was concrete action rather than sterile and prolonged debate.

8. The view was expressed that bringing UNSIA to closure at this point would be premature, in the light of the final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s scheduled for 2002. The point was made that the final review of the New Agenda would provide an opportunity for a holistic approach to the evaluation of all initiatives on Africa, including UNSIA, and for consensus on a comprehensive framework based on African ownership and leadership.

9. The view was expressed that the information contained in the evaluation of UNSIA, in particular in paragraph 57 of the evaluation report and in the penultimate paragraph of the note by the Secretary-General, made it clear that the United Nations Secretariat, as well as the agencies involved, had had a role in obstructing the progress of UNSIA.

Conclusion and recommendation

10. The Committee requested that a more detailed examination be conducted of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, in the context of the final evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and be submitted to it for consideration at its forty-second session.